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1962/10/20

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1. Economic and Political Pressures of Blockade Leading to the Fall of Castro

The offensive build-up coupled with the blockade provide new elements that can be utilized to stimulate the build-up of anti-Castro feelings in Cuba.]

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a. Desertion by Soviet Union

The first question is, of course, whether the Soviets will, or will not, attempt to run the blockade. If, presumably after some preliminary skirmishes, they accept the blockade -- and particularly if the blockade includes POL -- there is likely to be a sense of dismay and a feeling of desertion within the ranks of the Castro supporters.

b. Weight of the United States Decision

[The effect of a feeling of Soviet desertion will be intensified if it is accompanied by the sense that the United States has made an irrevocable decision to use increasing efforts to bring about the fall of Castro.] So long as it appeared that the Cuban people had a viable option between an

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alliance with the Bloc and making peace with the United States, they could have some hope that they could continue to defy America. But that hope would be denied them if the Soviet Union permitted Cuba to be isolated by the blockade.

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c. Resentment at Soviet Preemption and Use of Cuban Territory

The fact that the Communist forces are taking over areas of the country and excluding all Cubans can hardly help but be a cause for resentment on the part, not only of the Cuban people, but even of the Cuban military. The theme that Cuba is now an occupied country can be effectively used for propaganda purposes.

d. Increased Economic Pressure on Population

If -- but only if -- the blockade includes -- either initially or soon thereafter -- the interdiction of the importation

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importation of POL, we can expect its economic consequences to be felt in a reasonably short time. It is estimated that Cuba has seventh-five days normal supply of POL on hand -- which, by strict rationing, could be stretched to three to six months. The imposition of rationing would, however, give a sense of impending catastrophe. Moreover, the military would certainly insist on establishing priorities for ~~their~~ their own purposes. This kind of struggle always leads to internal dissension.

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e. Government in Exile

We should give further thought to moving

toward the creation of a Cuban Government in

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exile

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exile.

2. Development and Support of Military Action Against Castro

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With the heightened pressure on the Castro Regime and the Cuban people, brought about by the blockade and its consequences, the intensification of guerrilla activities should become easier -- since there would be a greater indication that the United States would be the probable ultimate victor.

General Escalation

The effort to foresee a transition from blockade to direct military action against Cuba raises a major question: Can the United States risk military action against Cuba with conventional weapons once the missile

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sites have become operational? Probably the answer must be negative. While the chances of a missile being fired as a result of the initiation of conventional military action, the consequences, if one by any chance were fired, under military action an unacceptable risk under these circumstances.

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A different situation would arise, of course, if we could be sure the missiles were not, and could not be, armed. Different answers, would there-
fore be possible if the problem is considered on alternative assumptions:

- a. Assumption that our intelligence establishes that there are no warheads presently in Cuba, that we can have full confidence in this intelligence, and that the blockade can be fully effective to prevent the introduction of warheads.

Under these circumstances the progression from blockade to direct military action again becomes relatively easy. ~~XXXXX~~
We could safely utilize any legitimate provocation to initiate either an air strike directed against the missile installations and nuclear carrying aircraft or an invasion.

- b. Assumption that there are warheads presently in Cuba, or that we cannot be sure that there are not, or that we cannot be sure that the

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blockade can effectively interdict their introduction.

Under these circumstances the progression to military action is subject to the serious disability which Secretary McNamara has pointed out -- the risk that a missile might be fired in the head of conventional attack.

This risk might be minimized by an invasion. Of course, if the invasion were preceded by an air strike against missiles and aircraft, the danger would persist. But if the invasion were first concentrated on the governmental complex in Havana -- leaving the missile sites free from direct air attack -- the danger would be minimized. The problem of the nuclear-delivery aircraft could be destroyed on a first strike.

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In view of these conclusions we should then consider a second question: Whether we could prevent the progress toward putting the missiles in operational condition by surveillance, threat and if necessary, military action.

Action of this sort would involve warning both the Cubans and the Russians that we would take military action at the first evidence of any progress toward putting the missiles in operational shape. This has many disadvantages. The element of surprise would be wholly eliminated and a premium would be placed on camouflage. There could thus be no assurance that some missiles would not become operational. Meanwhile, any strike at a Soviet missile would have all the disadvantages of the larger strike plan, since it would involve offensive action which would almost certainly result in the death of a number of Russians.

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4. Elimination of Missiles by Diplomatic Arrangement

This memorandum does not discuss this question which is being considered elsewhere.

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HOW NUCLEAR THREAT CAN BE ELIMINATED UNDER BLOCKADE PLAN

There are only four ways by which we can contemplate the elimination of the missiles and nuclear aircraft if we go the blockade route.

... is by a progressive escalation of actions leading from the use of force in implementing the blockade,

... as the possibility of a political deal with Khrushchev -- or more remotely

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